

Bossier Parish Community College Library

February 1, 2005, was a cold bitter day when Chancellor Tom Carleton began the ceremonies for the dedication of Bossier Parish Community College's new campus. Drifting from wind, to rain, to bits of snow, the 40 degree temperature did not reflect the exuberant spirit of the 1000 plus faculty, staff, students, board members, dignitaries, visitors, and friends of Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC).

It had taken the Chancellor more than five years to find new facilities for the college. A Southern Association of Colleges and Schools visitation in 1998 found that the college's facilities were too small for its ever growing student population. BPCC would need a plan to provide more space and upgrade its facilities or it could possibly lose its accreditation. Tougher admission standards at four year colleges and universities and obligations to the state to provide more programs were additional reasons to increase the size of the campus. At its location on Airline Drive in Bossier City the demand to enlarge would never become a possibility.

A plan for a new campus was needed and quickly. Under the Chancellor's guidance the possibilities became reality with the development of a creatively financed campus involving BPCC, the State of Louisiana, and Campus Facilities, Inc., which was established for the sole purpose of financing and building a new campus. Borrowing \$55 million in

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tax-exempt state bonds, Campus Facilities, Inc. was to build the buildings and lease them to BPCC for the next 25 years. Once the bonds were paid off, the corporation would give the campus to the State.

The city of Bossier City was also instrumental in supporting the construction of the campus. The city provided funding for the campus' infrastructure, including a \$1.4 million loop around the campus.

Ground for the new campus was broken on October 28, 2002, at its new site on Highway 80, near Louisiana Downs. Twenty-six months later Phase One, six new buildings, was completed. Forming a U shape and opening into a landscaped courtyard these buildings housed the following departments:

- Building A. Administration, Library, and Learning Center.
- Building B. Division of Science and Allied Health.
- Building D. Division of Telecommunications, Division of Education Technology and Electronic Learning, Division of Community Education, and Division of Workforce Development.
- Building E. Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Division of Mathematical and Technical Education.



- Building F Student Activity Center, also housing Admissions, Bookstore, Business Office, Financial Aid, Counseling, Student Activities, Recruitment and Culinary Arts.
- Building G. Division of Business and Computer Sciences and the Division of Liberal Arts.

Phase Two, a health and physical education center and a theatre/auditorium, would open Fall Semester 2005. At three times the size of the old campus the 334,000 square feet, seventy-one acre campus consolidated all of BPCC's former campus and its complexes. Located on East Texas Street (Highway 80) in Bossier City, the campus will accommodate 10,000 students with 2000 parking spaces.

For 37 years Bossier Parish Community College has thrived in temporary buildings and overcrowded classrooms. The library had previously been housed, first in a classroom at Airline High School, and in 1987 in BPCC's new Library/Classroom Building. With just 7328 square feet of space the library's area was quickly used and was unable to expand its services by 2000. By 2001 the collection had to be heavily deselected in order to find space for new acquisitions. Additional shelves were precariously added to existing units to provide the greatly needed shelf space. In the spring of 2004 the college administration was told that space was not available to shelve materials. In order to place new acquisitions on the shelves, older yet still valuable materials were boxed and stored until the new campus was completed.

The move to the new campus during the Christmas break of 2004 took three days. The library's faculty and staff, with the assistance of the college's movers, managed to pack and ship the library's entire collection. A few members of the library staff staying at the old campus helped to keep books in order as they were packed and shipped to the new campus, where the collection was immediately placed on the shelves by the rest of the library staff. The process had been planned the month before, and except for a few glitches, went exceptionally well. By working one long weekend, the library was up and running in three days, and the staff was able to enjoy their Christmas holidays.

The new library is located in Building A, sharing space with administrative staff and the college's Learning Center. The library's 13,990 square

feet space was designed by the firm of Slack-Alost-McSwain and constructed by Shreve Land Construction.

The library has become one of the main attractions at the new campus. From hardwood floors and attractive reserve shelving in the circulation area to spacious well-lighted offices, it is very pleasing to one's eyes. Books are no longer crammed tightly on each shelf. Shelving space will be available for years to come.

One of the most rewarding additions to the library is availability of offices for both faculty and most staff. In the old library, only the Dean of Library Resources and the System Librarian were afforded office space. A large technical processing area is equipped with plenty of shelving and storage. Individual study carrels with internet access are a plus to those students who bring their laptops. Study rooms for both individuals and groups have proven to be an asset. Restrooms and an elevator are also now located in the library, something it lacked previously.

Books are housed on both floors of the library. Reference, technology, arts, literature, geography, history, and Louisiana collections, as well as oversized and children's books are located on the first floor. Biographies, fiction, generalities, philosophy/psychology, religion, social sciences, languages, natural sciences, and mathematics collections, magazines, and newspapers, numbers are found on the second floor. The Technology Resource Center (TRC), also located on the second floor, is flanked by beautiful glass windows that allow a magnificent view from the lower level. Housed here are 35 computers available for student use.

The library continues to add daily to its collection of over 35,000 items which includes not only books and periodicals but a large collection of audiovisuals as well. The library offers access to a variety of electronic resources including indexes and databases that contain numerous newspaper and journal articles. Research assistance is available from professional librarians and trained staff members. Library orientations classes are offered for various courses. Individual assistance is always available.

Since the move to its new facilities the library has become the heart of the campus. Student and material use has greatly escalated. Warm cozy surroundings provide a place for students to study, do research, or just relax with leisure reading. The TRC is so heavily used that there are waiting lists to

access computers. Plans are underway to double the size of the TRC lab by spring 2006. In its past, the library's ability to adapt as changes occur has made it successful. The library faculty and staff continue their ability to address student needs and services as they unfold on a daily basis.

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